

Roma Civil Society in Hungary

1. Introduction

Why do I tackle the Roma-question within the context of Hungarian civil society, why is it such an important issue? The answer is tragically simple: besides their low socio-economic status, the Roma in Hungary undoubtedly suffer from lack of resources and institutional means for to articulate their needs and to obtain recognition for their claims. We have to emphasize that the ability of Roma to participate in social and community life in an organized manner is a critical issue.² The situation of the Roma communities, the largest minority living in Hungary, differs from that of the other minorities in our country in many respects. In the case of the Roma, social, employment, vocational training and educational problems are apparent to a greater extent.³ The major social and structural upheavals in Hungarian society since the collapse of communism, coupled with several types of discrimination, have had a disproportionately large and negative impact on the Roma, whose low social status, lack of access to education, and isolation make them relatively unable to defend themselves and their interests.⁴ Unfortunately, reforms initiated by Hungarian politicians have often been undertaken without considering their devastating impact on the country's Roma, as well. The Roma suffer nearly total marginalization within Hungarian society: they are almost entirely absent from the visible political, academic, commercial, and social life of the country.⁵ I have to admit in advance that the governments in power, the majority of the society, the Roma minority and the civil organisations all share responsibility in this matter.

Within this chapter I try to make and present a manifold examination: Firstly, I'm going to show all the relevant facts and data related to the Roma people and Roma society, also addressing and listing the crucial problems and current processes. Secondly – using a mainly theoretical approach - I introduce the significant reasons behind the facts that cause and conserve the weaknesses of the Roma civil society. Thirdly I present the current composition and main characteristics of the so called Hungarian Roma civil society. Fourthly, and finally, I make an attempt to collect the relevant plans, possible solutions and concerns regarding the development of that segment of the Hungarian civil society.

This chapter doesn't undertake a holistic, a totally general approach making an overview, a full review of the legal efforts and of the scope of duties of the current Hungarian government; rather it tends to manifest the relevant features, local colours and contour of the Hungarian Roma civil society. Nevertheless, it demonstrates the most relevant, newly enacted legal instruments and governmental programs launched in accordance with those laws, as well. It tries to present its

¹ Head of Department of Public Administration, Law Faculty of the University of the Hungarian Reformed Church (Budapest)

² Ádám Nagy - Levente Székely - Róza Vajda: Empowering Roma Youth - The Hungarian Civil Youth Sector, Highlighting Roma Organizations. Open Society Institute Youth Initiative, New York, 2010. p. 1-2.

³ Dr. Toso Donceev, President of the Office for National and Ethnic Minorities (ed.): Measures taken by the state to promote the social integration of Roma living in Hungary. Published by: Dr. Rudolf Joó, Deputy state secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Budapest, 2000. p. 1.

⁴ <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/country,,HRW,,HUN,,3ae6a7e10,0.html> (2011. 10. 20.)

⁵ Ibid.

statements with the aim of providing a statistically accurate, realistic overview of the situation of the Roma in Hungary, as well as details of all the efforts made by all the actors mentioned above to promote the social integration of the Roma.

In point of the terminology used, we have to admit that the term “Roma” - within a European context - is used – similarly to other political documents of the European Parliament and the European Council – as an umbrella which includes groups of people who have more or less similar cultural characteristics, such as Gipsy, Sinti, Travellers, Kalé, Gens du voyage, etc. whether sedentary or not; around 80% of Roma are estimated to be sedentary (SEC(2010)400).⁶

2. Societal facts - Social indicators

2.1. Population

The Roma (also known as the Romany people or Gypsies) constitute one of the largest and poorest ethnic minority groups in Europe and are concentrated in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The size of the Roma population was about 4 million in Central and Eastern Europe in the early 1990s (Zoltan Bárány, 2002) and is 10-12 million nowadays in entire Europe. Due to a high birth rate, the Roma population continues to grow, resulting in increasing population shares. In Hungary, the Roma are estimated to comprise (...) 10 to 12 percent of the young adolescent population (István Kemény and Béla Janky, 2006). The Roma have resided in Central and Eastern Europe for centuries, but their history has been characterized by separation and exclusion.⁷ Looking at the estimated Roma populations of 38 European countries, Hungary stands in the fourth place behind Romania, Bulgaria and Spain.

The Roma represent the largest minority among all the minorities living in Hungary today (roughly 6 percent of the total population). The real number of the Roma people, known also as "gypsies", in Hungary is a disputed question. In the 1990 population census, slightly more than 142.000 Hungarian citizens declared they were of Roma nationality. A decade later, in the 2011 population census more than 190.000 Hungarian citizens declared they were of Roma nationality. The Hungarian Central Statistical Office (HCSO) conducted the 15th census of Hungary in October 2011, but – unfortunately – only preliminary data are available, which do not include data on national or ethnic minorities.⁸

However, the most authoritative estimates suggest that there are – at least - 400.000-600.000 Roma in Hungary, some minority organisations reckon the true figure is 700,000-800,000, and some even say the figure is close to one million. In a generally ageing and declining population the Roma population shows a significantly younger trend. Since World War II, the number of Roma people is increasing rapidly, septupling in the last century. Today every fifth or sixth newborn Hungarian child belongs to the Roma minority. Estimates based on current demographic trends claim that in 2050 15-20 percent of the population (1.2 million people) will be Roma.⁹

⁶ EUROPEAN COMMISSION Brussels, 5.4.2011 COM(2011) 173 final. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS - An EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020.

⁷ Gábor Kertesi – Gábor Kézdi: The Roma/non-Roma Test Score. Gap in Hungary. Budapest Working Papers on the Labour Market (BWP) 2010/10. Institute of Economics – Hungarian Academy of Sciences – Department of Human Resources, Corvinus University of Budapest, Budapest, 2010. p. 5.

⁸ Anasztázia Bojer et al. (eds.): Population Census 2011. Preliminary Data 1. HCSO, Budapest, 2012.

⁹ http://encycl.opentopia.com/term/Hungary#The_Roma_minority (2011. 10. 20.)

2.1.1. Regional distribution

The Roma live scattered across the entire country, but this distribution is not even. Roma live in some 2,000 of Hungary's 3,200 settlements. Looking at regional distribution, 120,000 – the largest single number – live in the three northern counties. Currently there are 100,000 Roma in the eastern part of the country, and 60,000 in the Great Plain region. At least ninety thousand live in the Budapest area, and 115,000 in southern Transdanubia, while there are considerably fewer Roma living in the west of the country, around 15,000 persons. More than two-thirds of the country's population lives in urban settlements while 40% of Roma live in towns and cities. Compared to figures for 1970, the proportion of Roma living in urban settlements has increased dramatically, but Roma typically continue to live in provincial communities, and within these commonly in the most backward small settlements in the country.

2.2. Divisions within the Hungarian Roma population

From a cultural and linguistic point of view the Roma living in Hungary can be divided into three main groups:¹⁰

- The first and largest group is the so-called “Romungro” Hungarian Roma group that has Hungarian as its native language. In the period prior to World War II, these people supported themselves as musicians, clay-brick makers, plasterers and brick kiln workers, but primarily as agricultural day-labourers. They constitute more than 87% of all Roma in Hungary.
- The second largest group comprises the Romany-speaking “Oláh Roma” who between the two world wars made a living as travelling craftsmen, bell and cow-bell makers, copper-smiths, blacksmiths, traders, for instance as animal traders, and partly as day-labourers. They constitute approximately 8% of the Roma population.
- The third group is the Bea Roma who live primarily in the south-west of the country, speak an archaic form of the Romanian language, and who survived between the two world wars as trough makers and wood workers as well as day-labourers. They represent approximately 5% of the population.

One can observe a gradual decline in the use of the native language among the Oláh and Bea groups.¹¹ In the past 33 years there have been three representative studies on the Hungarian Gypsy population: in 1971, at the end of 1993, and in the first quarter of 2003.¹² Those studies use slightly different terminology, pointing the Hungarian-speaking Hungarian Gypsies, the Hungarian- and Gypsy-speaking (bilingual) Oláh Gypsies, and the Hungarian- and Romanian-speaking (bilingual) Beas Gypsies.¹³

2.3. Culture

¹⁰ Dr. Toso Doncsev, op. cit., p. 15.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² All three surveys included the total Gypsy population of Hungary. The 1971 study was coordinated by István Kemény; the 1993 one by István Kemény and Gábor Kertesi; and the 2003 one by István Kemény and Béla Janky. The 2003 sample selection plan and the questionnaire were prepared by István Kemény. The 1971 study and the 1993 study were carried out by the Institute of Sociology of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences; the 2003 study was part of the research programme entitled *The situation of the Hungarian Gypsy Minority at the beginning of the 21st century (segregation, income, education, and self government)*, within the framework of the National Research and Developmental Projects (NKFP), at the Institute for the Study of Ethnic-National Minorities of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. For the most important findings of the project, see: Kemény (1976), Kemény and Havas (1996), and Kemény and Janky (2003a, 2003b, 2003c, 2004). [Béla Janky: *The Income Situation of Gypsy Families*. TÁRKI Social Report Reprint Series No 22. TÁRKI, Budapest, 2005. p. 3.]

¹³ Béla Janky (2005) p. 5.

The transition after the fall of the iron curtain had one single positive consequence for the Gypsies: they can freely practice their language and culture. If necessary they can require an interpreter at court hearings or at the police, they can speak the Gypsy language, take a language exam, etc.¹⁴

From language and cultural aspects the Roma population is a strongly divided minority, and thus care has to be taken to preserve the several languages and cultures. In essence, the existing tradition preserving Roma communities are the last such groups in Hungarian society in which folk art represents an integral part of everyday life.

Written literature is new to the Roma culture. One problem faced by the Roma culture is that it does not have a mother country which could support, culturally and financially, the Roma living in Hungary. However, there has recently been something of a renaissance in discovering the many values of Roma culture.

2.4. Problems

The Roma are facing social and economic difficulties almost in all the European countries. On brief, the main (but not the only) problems faced by most of the Roma people are: their weak healthcare state, their low educational stock, their poor housing conditions and the high-rates of unemployment and, as a consequence, the lack of revenues, all these being combined with multiple forms of discrimination they are suffering from, all leading to social and economic marginalisation and exclusion.¹⁵ On brief, all these cumulated problems create a vicious circle which is very difficult to break (see more in ch. 3. and ch. 5.).¹⁶

The social and economic development of the Roma minority group represents one of the most delicate and controversial challenges that the Central and Eastern European countries (where the overwhelming majority of the Roma people live) have to deal with these days. The poverty rate in

¹⁴ Anna Kende – Eszter Szilassy: Identity and Assimilation of Ethnic and National Minorities in Hungary. <http://www.osi.hu/ipf/publications/eszters-minority.html> (2011. 10. 20.)

¹⁵ *Selected social indicators for the Roma and the non-Roma in Hungary*

Roma	Non-Roma
Education - secondary or more (percent of all adults)	
16	74
Education - college or more (percent of all adults)	
0.3	18
Employment to population ratio, men (percent of all adults)	
32	57
Employment to population ratio, women (percent of all adults)	
17	44
Unemployment rate (percent)	
48	4
Live in rural area (percent)	
40	35
Number of children born to women, age 15 to 19	
0.19	0.04
Number of children born to women, age 40 to 44	
3.4	1.9
Infants born with low birth weight (percent)	
17	7
Percentage of children in single-parent families	
17	22

[Gábor Kertesi – Gábor Kézdi, op. cit., p. 6.]

¹⁶ The Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 - *One Year of Romanian Presidency (July 2005 - June 2006)*. The Government of Romania - National Agency for Roma, Bucharest, 2006. p. 6.

these countries is ten times higher than the one measured in the case of the rest of the population. In the year 2000, World Bank statistics showed that 40% of the Roma living in Hungary were forced to subsist with less than 0.3\$/day while in Romania and Bulgaria this percentage rose to 80%.¹⁷ According to these data, of the one million people on the lowest level of income, 280 thousand (i.e. 28 per cent) probably belong to the Gypsy minority in Hungary. Among the poorest 300 thousand people the proportion of Gypsies is already 40 per cent. According to the Gypsy Survey, probably 370 thousand (between 340 and 420 thousand) Gypsies belong to the poorest one million people. According to the latest data, two-thirds or four-fifths of the poorest 300 thousand people are Gypsies. That means 37 per cent of Gypsies belong to the lowest income stratum.¹⁸

The situation of the Roma, or Gypsies has worsened tremendously over the past 20 years. As a result of stigmatization, discrimination, and government policies that have proved detrimental, Roma are far less integrated into society than other national and ethnic minorities. Although living in all areas of the country, Roma are concentrated in the economically most backward areas. Eighty percent of the Roma population suffers from severe poverty and is excluded from employment and proper education. Hungary's various governments have long failed to properly address their grave situation, and the Roma, themselves, have extremely weak representation in democratic institutions. In addition to deprivation and social exclusion, the lack of a homeland also leaves the Roma particularly vulnerable: they do not enjoy the same kind of protection and support other national minorities residing in Hungary can rely on. Besides the low socio-economic status, the Roma also suffer due to lack of resources and institutional means for articulating their needs and obtaining recognition for their claims.¹⁹

The disadvantageous situation of Hungary's Roma population is evident in all spheres of life, but it is especially visible among young people for whom the seemingly unsolvable problems of unemployment, lack of education, and poor housing are intertwined. Although the problems the Roma face are well known and widely discussed, very little reliable data exist on which to form policy.²⁰

2.4.1. Health situation

Regarding the health condition in Eastern European Countries it is enough to mention that, in the case of Roma people the life expectancy is 10 - 15 years shorter than the one measured for the rest of the population.²¹ The demographic composition of Gypsy families, which is rather different from the rest of the population, indicates that instead of income per person we should use income per consumption unit as a measure. Although we do use consumption units, our analysis is carried out on the sample of individuals. This way we gain a more exact picture of the relative positions.²²

2.4.1.1. Fertility

Compared to the typical age of 25–26 years of 15 years ago, Hungarian women today have their first child at the age of 27–28 (Spéder, 2004). The situation is quite different among the Roma population. The average age for a Roma woman to have her first child is 20 years, and there has been no noticeable change in this respect for the past few decades. Three in ten Roma women become mothers before they reach the age of 18 and around two-thirds have their first child at the

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Béla Janky (2005) p. 12.

¹⁹ Nagy – Székely – Vajda, op. cit., p. 1.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ The Decade of Roma Inclusion (...), op. cit., p. 6.

²² Béla Janky (2005) p. 12.

age of 20 at the latest.²³

The postponement of the age of child-bearing among all Hungarian women has been accompanied by a fall in the total fertility rate. From a rate of 1.8 in the early nineties, the value of the indicator in Hungary decreased to 1.3 by the turn of the millennium. The figure is significantly higher for Roma women. However - contrary to the expectations voiced by several authors - fertility has not increased since the change of regime (in 1989). In fact, the value of the TFR decreased somewhat in the years preceding the 2003 survey (from 3.3 to 3.0).²⁴

The study on the link between Roma women's fertility and their chances of integration challenges the notion that unfavourable labour market conditions have the effect of increasing the number of children, and draws a more subtle picture.²⁵ High fertility rates and child-bearing at a very early age are typical of the eastern region of Hungary. This makes it difficult, and indeed often impossible, for most Roma women to realistically consider continuing in education or getting a job, even if new education policies or better labour market opportunities make these options available.²⁶ Experience in Budapest shows that improved education opportunities can significantly reduce the rate of Roma women having children in their teens, and that better labour market chances result in a relatively rapid change in the demographic behaviour of adult Roma women.²⁷

Durst (2001a) carried out fieldwork in an especially disadvantaged settlement in the north of Hungary. One of the major findings of his work was that teenage Roma women today set greater store by family values and start families earlier than women of previous generations. Ladányi and Szelényi (2004) report similar demographic processes following their research in the northwest settlement of Csetény. Durst adopts Kelly's (1998) hypothesis concerning North American ethnic ghettos and argues that the reason for this process is that, in a hopeless labour market situation, early child-bearing is "*the only path to adulthood, to earning the respect of others and to gaining self-esteem*" (Durst, 2001a: 81).

2.4.2. Education

In some Central and South Eastern European countries, 90% of Roma children have fulfilled only the primary level of education while many of these children of Roma origin are frequently sent to schools for the mentally and physically disabled when they go to school at all.²⁸

Romas (called *cigányok* or *romák* in Hungarian) suffer particular problems in Hungary. In the past decades differences regarding education have grown between Gypsies and non-Gypsies in Hungary. On average 88 per cent of the Hungarian non-Gypsy population aged 3–5 go to kindergarten, whereas this figure is 42 per cent among Gypsies.²⁹ School segregation is also an especially burning problem, with many Roma children sent to classes for pupils with learning disabilities. Currently slightly more than 80% of Roma children complete primary education, but only one third continue studies into the intermediate (secondary) level. This is far lower than the more than 90% proportion of children of non-Roma families who continue studies at an intermediate level. Some 82 per cent of Gypsy youths aged 20–24 have completed primary school, but the majority of them completed it later than usual. On average, in 2000 five per cent of the population aged 16 did not complete primary school (Halász and Lannert eds. 2003), whereas in February 2003 36 per cent of the Gypsy

²³ Béla Janky: "The Social Position and Fertility of Roma Women." in: Ildikó Nagy, Marietta Pongrácz, István György Tóth (eds.) *Changing Roles: Report on the Situation of Women and Men in Hungary 2005*. TÁRKI Social Research Institute, Budapest, 2006. (pp. 132-145.) p. 137.

²⁴ Béla Janky (2006) p. 138.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 133.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Béla Janky (2006) p. 142.

²⁸ The Decade of Roma Inclusion (...), op. cit., p. 6.

²⁹ Béla Janky (2005) p. 12.

population aged 17 did not complete it. Between 1993 and 2003 the number of children considered backward and sent to special schools or remedial classes increased: 20 per cent of primary school-aged Gypsy children go to such schools.³⁰

The situation is made still worse by the fact that a large proportion of young Roma are qualified in subjects that provide them only limited chances for employment. Less than 1% of Roma hold certificates obtained in higher education. Their low status on the job market and higher unemployment rates cause poverty, widespread social problems and crime.³¹

The test score gap between Roma and non-Roma 8th graders in Hungary in 2006 is approximately one standard deviation for both reading and mathematics, which is similar to the gap between African-American and white students of the same age group in the U.S. in the 1980s. After accounting for on health, parenting, school fixed effects and family background, the gap disappears in reading and drops to 0.15 standard deviation in mathematics. Health, parenting and schools explain most of the gap, but ethnic differences in those are almost entirely accounted for by differences in parental education and income.³²

2.4.3. Unemployment - Situation on the labour market

Educational (academic) achievement within the European Roma population is much lower than within the rest of the population, although the situation differs among Member States.³³

Related to Hungary employment studies conducted during the 1970s looking at the proportion of active to non-active persons show a similar situation among the Roma and non-Roma population. In 1989, 60-80% of male Roma were employed, and 35-40% of female Roma held jobs. Since the social and economic transformation they have been squeezed out of the labour market at a speed and to a level which has never been seen before. In short, the Roma have lost their previously established, low level bases for making a living. In the wake of the change of regime more than half (72%) of the Roma population previously employed and capable of working lost their jobs.³⁴ In the second half of the 1980s, following the change in the socio-economic system, the transformation of the Hungarian job market speeded up. There was a larger jump in unemployment among the Gypsy population at this time than among the non-Gypsy population. In addition, the large-scale job losses began earlier among Gypsies than in other groups.³⁵

The economic crisis did not bring anything new to the lives of 60 to 80% of Roma, who have been unemployed at different times in all Central and South Eastern Europe or of Romani women that have been invisible in national policies and programs, but it did manage to bring an increasing attention to their plight, by the recent extremist attacks against Roma in Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary.³⁶

According to the 2008 Youth Policy Review in Hungary compiled by the Council of Europe, the Roma are the most disadvantaged group in the labor market. The majority live in small, underdeveloped settlements with poor infrastructure; the overwhelming majority (80 percent in

³⁰ Béla Janky (2005) p. 5.

³¹ http://encycl.opentopia.com/term/Hungary#The_Roma_minority (2011. 10. 20.)

³² Gábor Kertesi – Gábor Kézdi, op. cit., p. 3.

³³ EUROPEAN COMMISSION Brussels, 5.4.2011 COM(2011) 173 final.

³⁴ Dr. Toso Donceev, op. cit., p. 17.

³⁵ Béla Janky (2005) p. 6.

³⁶ Hard Times and Hardening Attitudes: The Economic Downturn and the Rise of Violence against Roma. Public briefing of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe. Tuesday, June 9, 2009 from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Witness Isabela Mihalache, Open Society Institute p. 3. <http://www.romadecade.org/files/downloads/News/CSCE%20Testimony%20-%20Isabela%20Mihalache.pdf> (2011. 10. 20.)

2003) lives below the poverty line.³⁷ Moreover, according to studies carried out nationally, the proportion of long-term unemployed among young Roma school-leavers is more than 40% which is greater than that of the identically qualified non-Roma of the same age who are also starting out on a career. Young Roma just out of vocational training school are more than twice as likely to be unemployed for longer periods – indeed almost from the moment they leave school – than their non-Roma counterparts, a fact which speaks volumes about the significant restrictions the young Roma generation face in life.³⁸

2.4.4. Settlement segregation

The settlement segregation of Romas is significant and it has shown an increasing tendency in the past few decades. In 2003 six per cent of registered Gypsy homes were situated in a Gypsy colony, two per cent of them were far from a settlement, 42 per cent were on the edge of a settlement, and 22 per cent were inside a settlement, but exclusively, or overwhelmingly in a Gypsy environment. Thus, 72 per cent of Gypsy families live in a segregated living environment.³⁹

2.4.5. Human Rights Situation in Europe related to Roma

Many of the estimated 10-12 million⁴⁰ Roma in Europe face prejudice, intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion in their daily lives. „Both the economic and human rights situation of the Roma started to become more visible in the European Union enlargement process which enabled a climate for a new reality check. Through the work of the Roma and other human rights activists it became clear that even the old Member States have done little to integrate Roma communities and even in countries with a small Roma population, Roma still suffer from the same discrimination reflected in poor or non-existent access to employment, health and education. Fortunately, in the old Member States, housing is less of an issue. However, Roma representation in decision-making structures and Roma selforganization is very limited as compared with the new Member States.”⁴¹

The protection of human rights in the accession process was downplayed to the cost of the social inclusion agenda and soon EU policy makers were confronted with the limited competence the Community has in addressing human rights violations such as forced sterilization, institutionalized segregation and other violations against Roma. As a result, these violations continue to take place even after joining the EU. Moreover, the hopes of Roma from the newest EU Member States, Romania and Bulgaria, to a better life in the European Union allowed by the freedom of movement, have been crippled because of limitations on settlement imposed by countries like Italy, France and the UK. The unpopularity of Roma in Europe, alongside with racial hatred and anti-Roma sentiment was magnified and gained legitimacy also inside the European Union, and Member States adopted discriminatory legislation and policies against Roma.⁴²

2.4.5.1. Human Rights Situation in Hungary related to Roma

The major social and structural upheavals in Hungarian society since the fall of communism, coupled with increasingly open discrimination, have had a disproportionately large and negative impact on Roma, whose low social status, lack of access to education, and isolation make them

³⁷ Nagy – Székely – Vajda, op. cit., p. 4.

³⁸ Kemény – Havas – Kertesi: To be a Roma... Hungarian Academy of Sciences Sociological Institute, Budapest, 1993. p. 19.

³⁹ Béla Janky (2005) p. 5.

⁴⁰ EUROPEAN COMMISSION Brussels, 5.4.2011 COM(2011) 173 final.

⁴¹ Hard Times and Hardening Attitudes (...)

⁴² Ibid.

relatively unable to defend themselves and their interests.⁴³ “Reforms initiated by Hungarian politicians have often been undertaken without considering their devastating impact on the country's Roma. Roma suffer nearly total marginalization within Hungarian society: they are almost entirely absent from the visible political, academic, commercial, and social life of the country. Many Roma feel that the promises of the democratic political reform, so strong in 1989, have amounted to very little for them. (...) Roma remain on the periphery isolated, despised, and denied effective participation in the process that is shaping the new Hungary and the role of minorities within it.”⁴⁴

3. Significant reasons that cause and conserve the position of the Roma civil society

Hungary achieved full membership in the European Union on May 1, 2004, yet this did not produce any immediate benefit for the majority or the minorities. The old problems, i.e. poverty, segregation and prejudice towards Roma remained⁴⁵ and it's not enough to modify here and there without touching the essence. So, what are the significant reasons that cause and conserve the position of the Roma civil society – beyond and behind the facts mentioned above in the previous sub-chapter?

1) Several medium-term packages of measures or programmes having an effect on the Roma in the short run have been passed by the governments in the last sixty years in Hungary. However, to find a solution to this complex problem of the social integration of the Roma, it's obvious that only complex and long-term packages of measures - concretized within the government's annual action plans - will be able to reach any goals concerning that issue. Unfortunately, the traditional way of execution of decisions of public policy tends to eliminate or omit the monitoring phase of those measures, which means that many processes begin but do not finish. That's why – for instance - decision have been made several times in the matter of the „mop-up” of Gypsy colonies (ghettos) in Hungary, but all these efforts have failed within a period of a few years... Consequently, any real changes need consistent and consequent intentions operating beyond budgetary periods and electioneering.

2) One of the most important shortages is the lack of those „advocacy groups” and civil entities that have risen up within the majority of the Hungarian society, attempting “to educate the general public as well as public policy makers about the nature of problems, (...) and the funding required to provide services or conduct research”.⁴⁶ The lack of these groups, entities and movements inside the majority of the Hungarian society is at least partly veiled by the efforts made by different governmental bodies, Roma self-governments and international entities dealing with discrimination of human rights, etc. The intrinsic “social integration of the Roma and the improvement of their living conditions are in the national interest and are tasks for the society as a whole”.⁴⁷

3) The crucial issue: formulation of a Roma middle class. The missing element.

Soon after the regime change of 1989 the self-organizing of ethnic and cultural minorities and of civil society in general was made possible, and a great number of Roma organizations were formed, joining a few other established organizations that had a special concern for Roma. Nevertheless,

⁴³ <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/country..HRW..HUN..3ae6a7e10.0.html> (2011. 10. 20.)

⁴⁴ <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/country..HRW..HUN..3ae6a7e10.0.html> (2011. 10. 20.)

⁴⁵ Erika Törzsök: Foreword. In: A Roma's Life in Hungary (Edited by Ernő Kállai and Erika Törzsök). Report 2004: Stagnation. Public Foundation for European Comparative Minority Research, Budapest, 2005. p. 7.

⁴⁶ Dean G. Kilpatrick, Ph.D.: Definitions of Public Policy and the Law. National Violence Against Women Prevention Research Center Medical Univ. of South Carolina, <http://www.musc.edu/vawprevention/policy/definition.shtml/>

⁴⁷ Dr. Toso Doncsev, op. cit., p. 1.

given the small size and isolated position of a middle-class elite, the level of organizing in the Roma population at large remains very low.⁴⁸ The social activism by Roma is instrumental in community development as well as in improving interethnic relationships and social solidarity.⁴⁹ It provides a means to fight against existing social divisions and growing hostility between Roma and non-Roma as well as against the pervasive ethnic segregation of Roma (which is present in nearly all areas of social life, especially housing and education).⁵⁰ The younger generation of Roma has a particularly crucial role in the formation of a politically self-conscious, effective, and powerful Roma elite that may become able to safeguard the interests of the Roma population as well as change the social majority's perception of Roma.⁵¹ Thus, the organizational opportunities and patterns of Roma youth as well as their participation in majority youth organizations represent an important field of several studies published in the last few years in Hungary.⁵²

4) During the first decade after the fall of the iron curtain „both the authorities and the independent philanthropy thought that multiculturalism, and stabilization of a Roma elite are the major primary tools usable for the social emancipation of the disadvantaged (...) [but in] the 2000ies the multicultural approach as a central goal got more and more critical reflections and classical social policy consideration started to play a more straightforward role.⁵³

Actually, multiculturalism has been a pillar of European ideology for decades, and thus in Hungary after the fall of the iron curtain, too. However, many statements within many European states have been made in the last few years declaring an end to the old concept of multiculturalism⁵⁴ and to “passive tolerance” of divided communities, and saying that members of all nationalities, minorities and faiths must integrate into the wider society and accept core values.⁵⁵ The debate over issues of assimilation and cultural tension generally, and specifically over the extent to which Roma can or should be integrated into a pluralistic society has been just started in Hungary.

„[...] while under state socialism the Gypsies mainly represented a deprived social stratum, in the new system they came to be defined as an ethnic group or a people. [...] Images about Gypsies are both changing and perennial, and still range between the two ideal typical poles of an ethnic/racial and a social definition.”⁵⁶

5) While their unique customs, traditions, and languages are valuable cultural assets to Hungary, cultural differences can hinder their inclusion into Hungarian society. In this respect, one particularly important area where such differences may become a hindrance is education.⁵⁷ For instance, Forray argues that „The bringing up and the education of children inside the family is a living part of Roma traditions today. On the other hand, the participation in public education does not generally belong to these”.⁵⁸

⁴⁸ Ádám Nagy - Levente Székely - Róza Vajda: Empowering Roma Youth - The Hungarian Civil Youth Sector, Highlighting Roma Organizations. Open Society Institute Youth Initiative, New York, 2010. p. 1-2

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Pál Tamás (ed.): Final report: 6. Hungary. Inclusion and education in European countries. INTMEAS Report for contract –2007-2094/001 TRA-TRSP0. DOCA Bureaus, Lepelstraat, 2009. 10. p.

⁵⁴ http://www.redstate.com/dan_mclaughlin/2010/10/18/merkel-multiculturalism-doesnt-work/

⁵⁵ <http://www.powerlineblog.com/archives/2011/02/028291.php>

⁵⁶ Binder Mátyás: Changes in the Image of ‘Gypsies’ in Slovakia and Hungary after the Post-Communist Transition. VLAAMS MARXISTISCH TIJDSCHRIFT. JAARGANG 45 NUMMER 2, ZOMER 2011. p. 21.

⁵⁷ Kiss Sándor Csaba: The Influence of the European Union on Domestic Roma policies in Hungary. Master Thesis. CEU, Budapest, 2007. p. 12.

⁵⁸ R. Katalin Forray: The Situation of the Roma/Gypsy Community in Central and Eastern Europe. Master Thesis. CEU, Budapest, 2006. p. 6.

6) In accordance with the official standpoint in Hungary, there shan't be a twofold or doubled society: there is and must be only one. That statement also means that there can't be a „Roma crime” paralelly with the „Hungarian crime”, even if the everyday life's common speech frequently uses that notion. Moreover, the contemporary „politically correct” way of speaking requires the usage of notions like poor and rich, instead of Roma and Majoritarian Hungarian, etc. The problematic element of absolutization of such a way of thinking is that it interferes with the elementary claim for the knowledge of those situations and affairs in which words such as Gipsy (cigány) or Roma are to be used or are allowed to be used without any discriminative effect. Without such a consensus the usage of these terms easily leads to distrust or overreaction in everyday life.

7) The last two decades could be characterized by a fierce battle between competing ethnic political actors whose aim is to gain the votes of the Roma. Moreover, it happened not just within the Roma community, but major political parties of Hungary (among which there is no Roma party) also treated as a loot (quarry) that could be got during the electioneering but which is a 'phenomenon' of no interest before and after.

8) The notion of 'ethno-business'⁵⁹ refers to „any practice that seeks to take unfair advantage of the existing legal framework for the protection of national minorities in order to obtain material, financial or political gain”.⁶⁰ Other terms used to describe the phenomenon include 'ethno-corruption', defined as 'the abuse of remedial measures for private gain in a manner contrary to the legislators' intentions',⁶¹ and 'minority business', emphasising the misuse of people's – sometimes only alleged – minority identity for the sake of political or economic ambitions.⁶²

Behind the increasing number of minority self-governments in Hungary (reaching a total of 2321 in 2010) many researchers suspect also manipulations connected to ethno-business.⁶³

9) The process of policy-making and formulating of politics was not primarily built on institutional forms of a participatory democracy, but exclusively on Parliament-centered means, i.e. political parties having seats within the Parliament. In addition, Roma are under-represented in the national assemblies of central and Eastern European states.⁶⁴

Referring to the law-making process in Hungary, we have to add that – under the provisions of the current Hungarian law - public negotiation is statutory only in those cases in which the bills are introduced by the Government; it's easy to avoid this obligation by bills formally introduced by MPs belonging to the governing party or parties. Unfortunately, this solution has become an ordinary, daily practice in Hungary which is a grievous obstacle for those natural persons and groups of citizens that do not have a strong ability to enforce their interests by lobbying.

Though both the former Constitution of the Republic of Hungary and the Fundamental Law (Basic Law) of Hungary that came into force on the 1 of January, state that the national and ethnic minorities living in Hungary, and thus the Roma minority too, “share in the power of the people and

⁵⁹ See also: Andrew Burton: *Minority Self-governance: Minority Representation in Flux for the Hungarian Roma. Ethnopolitics* Volume 6, Issue 1, 2007. pp. 67-88.

⁶⁰ Andreea Carstocea: *Ethno-business – the Manipulation of Minority Rights in Romania and Hungary.* p. 1. http://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/1322708/1/Carstocea_Chapter%20Two.pdf

⁶¹ Pap, A., L. 2008. “Human Rights and Ethnic Data Collection in Hungary.” *Human Rights Review* 9: 109-22. p. 114.

⁶² Hungarian Helsinki Committee, 1999. *The Situation of Minorities in Hungary.* http://www.minelres.lv/reports/hungary/hungary_NGO.htm. Accessed 10 December 2008. p. 27.

⁶³ Cultural diversity and inclusion policies. <http://www.culturalpolicies.net/web/hungary.php?aid=424>

⁶⁴ Aidan McGarry: *Ambiguous nationalism? Explaining the parliamentary under-representation of Roma in Hungary and Romania.* *Romani Studies*; December 2009, Vol. 19 Issue 2, p. 22.

constitute part of the state”, Roma seem to be less important citizens in everyday and public life. Though both the previous Constitution and the new Basic Law guarantee the minorities - beyond elementary rights such as the right to nurture their own cultures, the use of their native languages, education in their native languages, the right to use their names in their own languages – the right of collective participation in public life, they are almost entirely absent from the visible political, academic, commercial, and social life of the country either as individuals or as a group.

The Roma living in Hungary are Hungarian citizens, the situation of the Roma is not aggravated by unsettled citizenship relations, and in the wake of state measures directed at the creation of equality of rights and equal opportunities, the system of legal regulation ensures the rights of all citizens, and within this the rights of minorities, without distinction.⁶⁵ Nonetheless, even though there's a well formed and stable system of legal institutions (e.g. Commissioner for Fundamental Rights; Deputy-Commissioner for Fundamental Rights, responsible for the Rights of Nationalities;⁶⁶ Equal Treatment Authority;⁶⁷ parts of the newly shaped Hungarian judicial system; Constitutional Court; Police) making the fundamental human rights enforceable, the formal existence of these guarantees does not ensure the factual usage of them by those who are deprived in many ways, lacking even the knowledge (awareness) of their own rights.

10) Discrimination against Roma in Hungary

One of the most significant human rights problems in Hungary is the prejudice and discrimination against the Roma people in numerous fields of life: education,⁶⁸ gender,⁶⁹ employment,⁷⁰ sports,⁷¹ culture⁷² and so on. The measures taken by different governments in Hungary in the last two decade will be briefly listed and evaluated in the next sub-chapter.

In addition, we have to mention that the attention focused upon Roma populations by European institutions and organisations⁷³ appears to offer ways to address long standing inequalities for Roma. This process appears challenging and slow and is further complicated by broader pressures upon EU states as a result of the recent and ongoing financial turmoil.

4. The composition of Roma civil society according to types of organisations

⁶⁵ Dr. Toso Doncsev, op. cit., p. 30.

⁶⁶ Ernő Kállai, the Deputy Ombudsman responsible for the Protection of the Rights of Nationalities living in Hungary attempts to conduct comprehensive inquiries in the reorganised Ombudsman's Office. According to the plans, the Deputy Ombudsman will analyse the contradictions of legal regulations, the special circumstances relating to nationalities and the state of affairs regarding the cultural autonomy of the nationalities. <http://www.obh.hu/allam/eng/index.htm>

Starting from 1995, the annual report of the ombudsman for minority rights has appeared regularly. The so-called “White Paper” (published by the Legal Defence Bureau for National and Ethnic Minorities) presenting actual cases of discrimination against the Roma also appeared first in 1995.

⁶⁷ The Equal Treatment Authority (Egyenlő Bánásmód Hatóság) conducts proceedings if the principle of equal treatment might have been violated either at the request of the injured party or upon its own motion (ex officio) in cases set forth by law in order establish whether any discrimination occurred.

⁶⁸ See more: Policy Paper: Roma Youth Participation in Higher Education, by Angela Kocze Open Society Institute, 2001, www.osi.hu/ipf/

⁶⁹ See more: “Ethnicity and Gender in the Politics of Roma Identity in the Post-Communist Countries” by Angela Kocze in *The Intimate and the Extimate: Violence and Gender in the Globalized World*, ed., Sanja Bahun-Radunovic and V.G. Julie Rajan, Ashgate Press, 2008.

⁷⁰ http://www.neki.hu/index.php?option=com_content&view=section&layout=blog&id=14&Itemid=91

⁷¹ <http://www.polgaralapitvany.hu/>

⁷² http://www.kethanodrom.hu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2000:integration-of-roma-stalled-by-eu-financial-climate-study-finds&catid=101:koezrdek-levelek&Itemid=121

⁷³ http://eur-lex.europa.eu/en/dossier/dossier_54.htm

The transition process towards democracy in Eastern Europe implies a complete overturn of society. It is often referred to as a transformation process in which the society has to rearrange itself from below instead of organizing society from above by authorities. As it was referred to in the previous sub-chapter, one of the most important questions is whether different Roma leaders, groups and organisations are able to initiate and stimulate those transformation processes and to what extent. There are many aspects through which the elements and stages of this transition towards a healthier, even financially self-sustainable Roma civil society can be introduced; within this sub-chapter I would like to address that core issue by showing the composition of the Roma civil society according to visible and registered organisations (institutions) having an important role within the transition of the Hungarian Roma society in the last two decades in Hungary. The aim of this sub-chapter is to draw some lessons from the shape, extent and features of the so called Roma civil society and its entities in the last twenty-plus years.

Actually, those organisations that are to be shown are influencing each other in many ways also, many overlaps could be found in accordance with the founders, sponsors and volunteers: my task is just to reveal - without calculating and evaluating the real importance of - those associations, foundations, community houses or halls of residence, etc., that serve as agents of that inner transformation within Roma communities.

This analysis makes it clear that organisations dealing with Roma issues supporting those communities are still mainly and overwhelmingly international entities or quasi (non)governmental organ(isation)s.

4. 1. Building up Roma civil society from outside

„Civil society building is an endogenous development process. International donors can (and should) create a framework in which a domestic civil society could operate and develop, but cannot and should refrain from creating civil society themselves. This should be done by local citizens. The same holds true for authorities in these countries. Their role is to promote civil society development by creating a proper legal framework in which civil society can develop itself. States should guarantee the freedom of association for citizens, and create a free market where civil society could secure its own financial resources. This is a particularly sensitive issue since communist governments of Eastern Europe have a legacy of ‘engineering civil society by establishing so-called ‘GONGOs’ (governmentally organised nongovernmental organizations), which are not at all independent from the state.’”⁷⁴

Many countries in the Eastern European region had had their pre-Communist institutional inheritances upon which to build democracy, and with which the desirable patterns of behavior and organizational forms could be established and nurtured. Notwithstanding the pressure of external – governmental and nongovernmental – actors was so intense, that those „ancient” examples and institutions were neglected or at least marginalized in most of the cases: the East European region was virtually 'invaded' by many NGOS, experts and consultants.⁷⁵

4.1.1. International actors

Thousands of transnational NGOs⁷⁶ had been identified in Hungary and there are hundreds that tackle Roma issues with different types of support, mostly in the field of human rights and education. The most well-known is the SOROS Foundation (e.g. 'Roma 886 Programme of it).

⁷⁴ Thomas Carothers: Civil Society. <http://accurate.clemson.edu/becke//prtm320/Carothers.html> [Source: Thomas Carothers: Aiding Democracy Abroad: The Learning Curve (Washington: Carnegie Endowment, 1999)]

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ NGOs based in one country that regularly carry out activities in others.

The phenomenon has a twofold implication. A confluence of factors -- the lowering of political barriers after the end of the cold war, new information and communications technologies, lowered transportation costs, and the spread of democracy -- has created a fertile ground for nongovernmental groups to widen their reach and form multicountry links, networks, and coalitions:⁷⁷ on the one hand these opportunities created an environment in which financial support could be reached more easily, but on the other hand these donations debilitate inner mechanisms of solidarity, cooperation and initiation, though it's not impossible to take over the lead of those programmes that were backed by others, especially by international entities.

We have to admit that increasing international attention is focused on the situation of the Roma. International organizations are continually engaged in analysing the living conditions, the situation of human rights of the Roma living in Hungary, also giving support by organizing conferences, meetings and calling society's attention to the facts revealed.

4.1.2. Quasi nongovernmental organisations

There are several 'Roma' civil organisations that are not totally independent from the state, from a certain governmental body. Some of these were founded by the state and financed via the state budget (e.g. public foundations), others were established by Roma citizens through an election process, though the institution (the legal form) was created and constantly supported in many ways by state organs (Roma self-government). Both can be characterized by performing public duties, which entitles them to use the financial sources of the Hungarian State (Hungary).

4.1.2.1. Self-Government

The National Gypsy Self-Government is one of the main advocacy bodies of the Roma people. Act LXXVII of 1993 on the Rights of National and Ethnic Minorities ensures – in a manner unique in European practice - the 13 minorities that are native to Hungary individual and collective minority rights, the right to personal autonomy and the right to establish self-government bodies. The act gives the minorities the right to form local and national self-governments. The minority self-government is a completely new legal entity, the latest element of the Hungarian public law system. As far as the minority self-governments are concerned, the achievement of cultural autonomy means the right – enshrined in the act – to independently decide in their own sphere of authority on the establishment, take-over and maintenance of institutions, in particular in the areas of local public education, the local press and electronic media, the nurturing of traditions and in culture.

The first minority self-government elections took place in 1994-95, at the same time as self-government elections. All the electorate in the given settlement are allowed to participate in the elections, and may vote for the given minority candidate. During the first parliamentary term a total of 738 minority self-governments were formed. Of these, 477 were Roma minority self-governments, giving nearly 1,500 Roma a role in public affairs.⁷⁸ The number of the Roma self-governments was 1117 in 2006 and 1252 in 2010.⁷⁹ The procedural rules and the tasks of these self-governments have been slightly changed by the simplification of the system [Act CLXXIX on National Minorities (2011)].

4.1.2.2. Public Foundations and their successors

a) Public Foundation for Gypsies in Hungary

The Public Foundation for the Gypsies in Hungary was the most important distributor of funds in the Roma segment for many years from the nineties. The government established the foundation in order to support the preservation of the identity of the Roma living in Hungary, promote social

⁷⁷ Carothers, op.cit.

⁷⁸ Doncsev, op. cit.. p. 30.

⁷⁹ Source: National Election Office <http://www.valasztas.hu>.

integration, reduce Roma unemployment, increase the opportunities in education both inside and outside schools, and protect human rights, all in the interest of creating equality of opportunity. Its main areas of activity included supporting agricultural-type initiatives designed to provide a livelihood for Roma living in villages as well as the realistic business schemes of Roma small entrepreneurs, to finance such programmes which promote the advancement of the studies of Roma children, and to establish prejudice-free legislation and a minority-friendly social atmosphere.

b) Public Foundation for National and Ethnic Minorities in Hungary

The Public Foundation for National and Ethnic Minorities in Hungary provided the single largest amount for the cultural programmes of the national and ethnic minorities. Its operation was required because of the demands and the political and social significance of the state public task.⁸⁰ Representatives from all 13 minorities in Hungary took part in the work of the board of trustees. The President of the Office for National and Ethnic Minorities also acted as the chair of the trustees of the Public Foundation.

c) The Gandhi Public Foundation

The aim of the Gandhi Public Foundation (established: 1995) is, through the foundation and maintenance of pre-schools, primary and secondary schools, to promote the training of open-minded young Roma who are responsive to the sciences and are attached to their people and native language. The Public Foundation operates the exemplary Gandhi High School and Halls of Residence in Pécs, which currently (2012) has 183 students.

The school functions as a six-class high school. 95% of the students are Roma, and thus the school receives supplementary minority funding from the state budget. The Gandhi High School aims to become a multicultural educational institution. It wants to bring up committed intellectuals interested in Roma affairs. Since in the school's specified catchment area the majority of residents speak the Beash language, Beash and Romany languages and cultures are taught in the school, and English and German as foreign languages.

In 2012 Wekerle Sándor Fundmanagement of the Ministry of Public Administration and Justice took over the tasks (public duties) earlier managed by the Public Foundation for Gypsies in Hungary and the Public Foundation for National and Ethnic Minorities in Hungary. The Gandhi Public Foundation has also been changed, the 27 founders transformed it into Gandhi Public Benefit Nonprofit Limited Company (Gandhi Közhasznú Nonprofit Korlátolt Felelősségű Gazdasági Társaság). The official aim of these reforms was to centralise financial sources, and make them more effective and reachable.

4.2. The „real” Roma civil sector⁸¹

The next step is to examine those „real” civil organisations within the Roma civil sector that came into existence by the intents of Roma people and communities.

4.2.1. Human rights, community building

There are several human rights civil organizations and charitable associations in Hungary which undertake to represent the interests of the Roma minority. Among them it is worth mentioning the political, human rights and legal aid activities of Lungo Drom, the Roma Civil Rights Foundation,⁸²

⁸⁰ As an example the government provided the Foundation with HUF 395 million in 1997, HUF 474 million in 1998, and HUF 530 million in 1999 in order to realize its objectives.

⁸¹ Ádám Nagy and Levente Székely: The Youth Civil Sphere. Civil Review 2008/1–2. p. 136.

⁸² Roma Civil Rights Foundation (Roma Polgárjogi Alapítvány): Representation of and legal defense for Roma groups and individuals {regardless of age}, coordination of Roma communities, organization of cultural activities.

the Roma Parliament,⁸³ the Phralipe Independent Roma Organization, and the Professional Association of Roma Leaders,⁸⁴ Másság (Being Different) Foundation⁸⁵. The abovementioned social organizations play a major role in looking after the interests of the Roma minority, but most of them does not provide direct legal representation for the affected parties. Several entities serve as 'complex' service providers; e.g. „Bogdán János” Roma Community House in Nagykanizsa is a good example.⁸⁶

There are also several organizations that provide their services not only for gypsies, managing conflict and building consensus between Roma and majority groups in Hungary.⁸⁷ Moreover, Khetanipe Association for Roma Solidarity (Khetanipe Romano Centro), in cooperation with Roma and non-Roma civil organizations and state institutions, aims to treat societal and individual problems and address the disadvantages of Roma through programs based on voluntary work in several areas: child and youth education; reinforcement of Roma ethnic identity; the teaching of Beash language; preservation of Roma culture; promotion of communal life; improvement of living conditions of Roma people, defense of their rights; drug prevention; and education in healthy lifestyle.

4.2.2. Youth and education

4.2.2.1. Roma Youth Organizations

We have very little information about Roma youth organizations.⁸⁸ Such dearth is attributable, in part, to the lack of comprehensive research on youth organizations in general; and, in part, to the fluid nature of Roma youth.⁸⁹ Many young Roma drop out of school and quickly become

⁸³ Hungarian Roma Parliament maintains institutions; collects Roma artwork and literature; publishes a magazine, and organizes artistic and cultural programs to change the social situation of the Roma population in Hungary and preserve its cultural identity; provides representation and legal consultancy, informs and coordinates local Roma civil self-organizations.

⁸⁴ Also mentioned as Professional Union of Roma Leaders. The Union was formed in Debrecen in 1995, with the aim of organizing training for the Roma population resident in the region, and providing interest-protection and legal representation and services for conflict and crisis resolution programmes. Their training courses cover the public and professional work of the local Roma self-governments and civil organizations. An employment group – which, under the management of qualified employment organizers, has arranged training courses for young Roma – was established with the cooperation of the County Regional Labour Workforce Development Centre. The Union also operates the Roma Pedagogical Advisory Service. With the involvement of a media trainee in the organization, the Union takes part in the editing of regional radio programmes and the publishing of its own newspaper called ROMINFO. In the frame of the local crisis resolution and prevention programmes it provides regular legal aid services and legal advice also.

⁸⁵ The Foundation was launched in 1993, and has since examined thousands of complaints. It disposes of a network of lawyers and experts extending throughout the country. Its aim is to examine fully and objectively all the facts surrounding acts of discrimination perpetrated against Roma. A publication entitled the White Notebook is published every year detailing the work of the Foundation. It is available in Hungarian and English. The office's operational costs are covered from international and domestic tenders. It engages in close cooperation with government and civil organizations in the interest of creating a discrimination-free society. Both its efforts and its activities are in complete harmony with the anti-discriminatory tasks of the medium-term package of measures.

⁸⁶ The Community House was established on the initiative of the Nagykanizsa County Town Roma Self-government in 1997. Its purpose is to provide the Roma and non-Roma inhabitants of the area with a variety of different services. The activities of this multifunctional institute range from providing information on cultural, educational, employment and health matters, on home nursing programmes, and the provision of legal and other advice. The important charitable influence the Community House exerts extends not only throughout the local Roma community, but actually far beyond this to the wider community. It works to reduce prejudices, cultivate an understanding of the values of Roma culture, and its programmes have led to a variety of cooperative contacts. Weekend classes in folk identity (organized in cooperation with the town's primary schools) were introduced at the day-care centre. Roma specialists teach in this educational programme.

⁸⁷ Partners Hungary Foundation is a good example.

⁸⁸ Typically, Roma youth organizations depend heavily on local self-governments and minority local self-governments.

⁸⁹ Civil youth organizations are unique because their constituency is “time limited.” One can be an environmental or

categorized as adults. Therefore, we must rely on estimates. Studies carried out by the National Youth Research Institute (NYRI), based on unpublished data of the Central Statistical Office (CSO) for 2005, suggest that roughly 500–600 civil organizations operating in Hungary include Roma in their target population. A large number of these groups are not organizations of Roma youth, rather, they are majority organizations aimed at helping Roma young people.⁹⁰ Roma youth organizations, in turn, have a large non-Roma membership. Every third young person attending the programs organised by Roma organisations comes from the majority society: this fact demonstrates the openness of Roma organizations.⁹¹ Programs designed to encourage intercultural dialogue and learning between Roma and non-Roma young people include leisure activities (e.g., sports programs, trips); cultural programs (e.g., cultural quiz competitions, media programs); and student exchange programs.

One of the most important findings of the researches related to that field is that the self-organization of Roma youth is rudimentary. Other findings include that the active members of Roma youth groups are older on average than those of youth organizations in general and that Roma organizations are directly involved in starting initiatives for young people only on the local level. European experts have concluded that the initiatives launched by governments and the majority society are not always successful because the Roma often “did not react in the expected way to these proposals; thus, majority representatives frequently (even personally) expressed their disappointment and withdrew the proposals citing the unwillingness of the Roma to cooperate as their justification.”⁹²

Beyond the organizational opportunities and patterns of Roma youth, their participation in majority youth organizations is to be an important field of research in the near future as well.

Key actors in the civil youth sector – among others - include the following groups:⁹³ Inner Fire Association (Belső Tűz Egyesület)⁹⁴ National Association of Young Roma (Fiatal Romák Országos Szövetsége, FIROSZ),⁹⁵ Association for the Protection of the Interests of the Elderly and Young Roma (Roma Idősek és Fiatalok Érdekeit Védő Egyesület), Foundation for Roma Children (Romagyermekéért Alapítvány).

4.2.2.2. Education

Education is closely connected with younger generations: the strong interdependence is obvious. As it has been already mentioned above, those educational, pedagogical and training methods and institutions turn out a success that are able to provide a complex service and care, avoiding dropout which is the most dangerous and frequent symptom among Roma pupils. Let's briefly enumerate the most successful Hungarian examples!

While the **Gandhi Halls of Residence** are integrally linked to the **Gandhi High School**, there are

human rights activist all of one's life; however, every individual will ultimately “age out” of a youth organization. Consequently, the world of civil youth organizations is ever-changing.

⁹⁰ Network of Youth Experts Initiatives (Ifjúságügy Szakértőinek Társasága, ISZT): This network of cooperating professionals, engaged in research, publishing, preparation of course materials, collection of documents, and organization of events, is one of the most important civil initiatives in the youth segment.

⁹¹ Paszkál Kiss - Szilvia Kovács - Miklós Máder: Roma Youth Organizations in Hungary. Budapest, GYISM Mobilitás, 2004.

⁹² Empowering Roma Youth – The Hungarian Civil Youth Sector, Highlighting Roma Organizations by Ádám Nagy, Levente Székely, and Roza Vajda Open Society Institute Youth Initiative, New York, 2010. p. 5.

⁹³ Information on some of these groups is extremely limited.

⁹⁴ Provides assistance to Roma students, youth, and the elderly in education, interest representation, and employment; also operates a specialized high school for Roma students.

⁹⁵ Aims to ensure secondary and college education of Roma youth by providing scholarships to talented students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

halls of residence, which accommodate young Roma attending different secondary schools. Such an establishment is the **Collegium Martineum** (in Mánfa), founded in the summer of 1996 by the Alsószentmárton Roman Catholic Congregation, the Witten St. Marthin Charity, the Pécs Diocese Charity, the Amrita Student Circle and three private individuals in order to look after and provide an opportunity for disadvantaged children to pursue studies at the better secondary schools, and then later at universities or colleges. **Szent Márton Pre-school** also operates in Alsószentmárton; the school - maintained by the Pécs Diocesan Authority - implements a Catholic, Roma nationality pedagogical programme, which is person-centric and builds on the values of Roma families. The 74 children attend the pre-school study in two languages (Hungarian and Beash) which are continually used in everyday life. The head of the institution and the majority of the staff in the pre-school speak these two languages. The aim of the pedagogical programme is to strengthen the children's sense of identity and to prepare them for primary school.

Another type of residential hall is the one which serves to provide accommodation for pupils attending primary schools. The "**Kedves House**" next to the Nyírtelek Primary School is just such a tried and tested model. The local self-government maintains the school, but since the support thus available cannot cover all the institution's costs, the school resorts to finance available through tenders. It is an eight-class primary school with both Roma and non-Roma pupils. The institution brings up the children in a spirit of tolerance and coexistence with the aim of seeing ever more of its children win places in secondary education. The halls of residence are available to those children who come from severely disadvantaged backgrounds and who through their studies show particular promise. The school has a special Roma programme whereby children are brought up to a unified level in a separate class for the first two years, and then from the third year their studies are integrated with the other children.

The establishment of the **Roma Opportunity Alternative Foundation Vocational School (Szolnok)** is unique of its kind: it was the first time that the Roma took their future into their own hands and established an educational institution, which provides an opportunity not only for Roma but also for non-Roma young people in similarly difficult circumstances. At the end of 1996 a group of specialists brought together with the assistance of the National Roma Self-government started to formulate the concept of establishing a school which would offer an alternative to those children who drop out of school but are still in the age when they have to attend school. It provides the opportunity for Roma and non-Roma young people who have dropped out of secondary school training to improve their opportunities of finding work and making a livelihood through vocational skill training.

Türr István Institute of Training and Research was also established primarily on behalf of those Roma who are undereducated or disadvantaged in access to different training and educational sources. The Institute – governed by the ministry of Public Administration and Justice - provides several vocational trainings for Romas.

As it could be seen above most schools and halls of residence have been founded and maintained by non-Roma organisations (typically foundations, local governments or churches⁹⁶) or non-Roma persons. Nevertheless, these entities – in many ways - serve as initiators of Roma self-organizing and launch those programs that 'channel' different forms of self-expression and identity building, etc., with the help of which the next generation will be able to take part in the continuation of those programs actively (as Roma teachers, lawyers, etc.).

Beyond Roma Opportunity Alternative Foundation Vocational School some other educational projects and institutions have been launched by Roma persons, one of which is renowned Hungarian jazz guitarist Ferenc Snetberger's music school for Roma kids (**Snetberger Music Talent Center** – Snetberger Zenei Tehetség Központ Alapítvány) that's coming to the end of its inaugural year, with around 60 students getting instruction not just in their instruments but also in subjects such as English and computer skills seen as a key to building a professional career.⁹⁷

⁹⁶ See in ch. 4.5.

⁹⁷ <http://www.centredaily.com/2012/04/22/3171393/hungarian-jazz-great-guides-young.html#storylink=cpy>

Nearly all of the students at the Snetberger Music Talent Center in Felsőörs, on the north side of Lake Balaton, come from underprivileged Roma families. The school chose its students mainly through auditions held around the country; most of the teachers are, like Snetberger, also Roma.

"In regular music schools, their real talents and values often go unnoticed," Snetberger said. "That's why I wanted to have mostly Roma for teachers, because they are clear about this and recognize the students' skills. (...) My main aim is to build on and develop what they bring from home, to open their musical world to new styles they haven't yet known."

Fortunately, civil organizations dealing with Roma are present within the total cross-section of the educational system of Hungary: **Romaversitas Foundation** (Romaversitas Alapítvány) provides financial support, scholarships, and assistance in learning (consultancy, equipment) for Roma university students and students preparing for university studies. It organizes seminars, operates a library and a facility for renting video tapes, CD-s and it also participates in an international student exchange program. A unique initiative of **Semmelweis University and Avicenna International College**⁹⁸ was set up in 2010, introducing a special program for the education of the young Roma students who are ready and willing to study in one of the medically related fields.⁹⁹ Well-determined, talented students with a strong and proud identity (10 students) were invited to participate in the program in the very first year.

The program has 3 main characteristics:

- Scientific preparation of the students prior to their admission to the medical university in chemistry, biology, anatomy, ...
- Tutor/mentor support for students after their admission to the medical university. *The Roma students enjoy the mentoring support of the volunteer university professors.*
- The social/cultural education and support of the students. This is an important part of our education and starts during the preparation and continues in the university. Lectures, visits to museums, theaters, and psychological consultations have been provided by the most prominent experts of the field such the president of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Rector of the Music Art Academy and similar dignitaries.

This program has proven to be a historical and successful model. As in this case, those Roma students receive the medical education and the support of the program that are proud of their identity and will go back to their communities after having completed their education.

4.3. Roma and Media

If we want to know what the most important „reference groups” or „targets” of social movements within political opportunity structures are – in general, we can mention the following ones:¹⁰⁰

- a) The political-administrative system, including its executive bodies, which appear to be the most important target groups of socio-political movements;
- b) The agents of control, the courts in particular should be taken into account;
- c) Intermediaries in the realm of politics such as parties and interest groups are also key factors in a movement's environment;
- d) Reactions of the public;
- e) Mass media.

Accordingly, Roma organizations should aim at the interconnection with these spheres and institutions as well. Unfortunately, the reasons enumerated in the first and second sub-chapters

⁹⁸ Avicenna International College with a long tradition in the provision of the medical preparatory courses supported the program by providing the infrastructure and undertook the education during the preparatory phase.

⁹⁹ They won a grant within the framework of the Semmelweis University (TÁMOP 2010-2012) which partially supports this program for two years.

¹⁰⁰ Máté Szabó: Human Rights and Civil Society in Hungary (1988-2008). OBH, Budapest, 2009. pp. 207-208.

make it almost impossible to do so. Thus, instruments and means letting Roma civil organizations take an active part in public and especially in cultural life are of enormously great importance:

From 1990 several **Roma newspapers** - both conventional and electronic ones - have been published (the majority with state support), such as Phralipe (Brotherhood), Lungo Drom (Long Road), Világunk (Our World), Amaro Drom (Our Road), Kethano Drom (Common Road) and Cigányfűró (Gypsy drill, nickname of the hand-drill) and ROMINFO. Publishers were earlier supported by the Public Foundation for National and Ethnic Minorities in Hungary.

The Roma Half-Hour minority programme is transmitted on the **Hungarian Radio** weekly, and Roma Magazine is broadcast on the **Hungarian Television** once a week.¹⁰¹ In addition, the Hungarian Roma community has its own radio channel, named Radio C (FM 88.8).¹⁰²

Translations to Beash have been made e.g. “Cigánybáró” (Baron of the Gypsies) – the novel of the famous Hungarian writer Mór Jókai has been published in the 'beás' language for the first time in Hungary. The translation was done by socialpedagogue Terézia Kalányos and the 1000 copies of the 160 pages long book were published by Publisher Czupi in Nagykanizsa. Gyula Czupi in an interview stated that “the purpose of this publication was far from being profit-oriented, the primary reason was to fulfill a cultural mission, to demonstrate how the Beásh language – the language most commonly used by the Roma of our region – could serve as a vehicle for literature.”¹⁰³

4.4. Roma and sports

Sports can be a vehicle for a break-out from deprived situations and status. “SPIN – Sport for Social Inclusion and Elimination of Racism in Football” was a conference organised by the Mahatma Gandhi Human Rights Organisation and the Hungarian Football Association, held on February 20th, 2012 at the HFA headquarters. One of the speakers, the leader of the well-known Hungarian Roma Team, considered it important to emphasise the success story of the twenty year-old minority team (114 victories out of 116 matches). A plan of a Roma Football Academy has been proposed and discussed several times, but it hasn't been achieved yet.

Another initiative, the Halker-Kiraly Team Kick-Box Academy's 'Sportintegration' program has been dedicated for disadvantaged (mainly roma) young people.

We have to reveal that the majority of these sport organisations is a 'grassroot organisation', with a fairly dubious financial background.

4.5. Roma and religious activities

There are several religious entities established and maintained by Roma people. The majority of those “churches” is officially registered as an association e.g. Élővíz Roma Baptista Gyülekezet in Rétközberencs (*Living Water* Roma Baptist Congregation); Budapesti Roma Gyülekezet (Roma Congregation of Budapest); Hodászi Görög Katolikus Cigány Egyházközség (Greek Catholic Gypsy Congregation in Hodász).

In 2011 the very first Roma order in history was established by well-known Roma musicians, football players and teachers in Mátraverebély. The order was named after Beatyfic Ceferino, who suffered martyrdom in the World War II. It aims at strengthening the spiritual life of Roma.

We have to admit, that there are some Hungarian speaking Roma Congregations abroad, outside of Hungary also, such as New Life Christian Roma Church (Új Élet Keresztény Roma Egyház) in Ukraine, established by Hungarian speaking Roma.

¹⁰¹ Dr. Toso Doncsev, op. cit., p. 35.

¹⁰² <http://www.radioc.hu/>

¹⁰³ Kállai – Törzsök, op. cit., p. 12.

In the period of the last few years several Hungarian Churches have established so called colleges for Roma pupils and students, providing accomodation, financial help, training and other programs (e.g. Miskolci Görögkatolikus Cigány Szakkollégium, Wáli István Református Cigány Szakkollégium, Hajdúdorogi Roma Evangélikus Szakkollégium).

4.6. Roma and economic (civil) cooperation

Many types of self-help groups have evolved in the last few years in Hungary. One of these, the *social cooperative* is a relatively new phenomenon and legal form of economic cooperation in Hungary.

Within the context of the socio-ecological transition, the Social Economy model¹⁰⁴ represents a source of job and activity creation that should be promoted.¹⁰⁵

The social cooperative form – although it is fundamentally appropriate for combining social and economic activity – hampers the development of the organization in Hungary according to more than half of the respondents. The main problem is that the legal form is too new so its reputation and recognition is low. It is true among the public, among the business community, and even among public authorities. The lack of information retards and complicates the administration and office routine.¹⁰⁶

5. Summary and solutions

5.1. Introduction

At the end of this chapter I have to sum up the relevant findings and, in addition, introduce those solutions that are – at least partly - unavoidable and efficacy of which is feasible. As it has been proven one of the most oppressed ethnic groups in Europe, the Roma (Gypsies) in Hungary face many problems. Centuries of discrimination, the Twentieth Century experience, and, from 1945 to the end of the former regime, party policies and programs have resulted in the isolation of Roma from mainstream Hungary. Areas that still need to be addressed are the Roma's unfair treatment under the law, ineffective governmental representation, social and economic discrimination, and

¹⁰⁴ Social economy in Hungary – activities:

- Flexible (or fuzzy) definition: a mix of activities in non-profit sector, in civil organisation and in other sectors
- Limited role in areas as social inclusion, employment, social services and health care
- Encouraged civil society development through associations, voluntary organisations, foundations

Social economy in Hungary - organizations:

- Between state and market
- National legal framework for the operations
- Include: associations, foundations, charities, community cooperatives
- Mainly at the local level of government

/Leonardo da Vinci Transfer of Innovation – 2010-1-FR1-LEO05-14505. Budapest Business School (BBS) ARIADNE,

http://www.bgf.hu/szervezetiegysegek_bgf/rektoratus/FELNOTTKEPZKOZP/PALYAZATIIRODA/dokumentumok/ARIADNE/ARIADNE_Disszemin%C3%A1ci%C3%B3s%20%C3%A9s%20kommunik%C3%A1ci%C3%B3s%20terv_BGF.pdf/

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Dr. Pethe – Dr. Gyuri – Németh – Feké – Simon: A szociális szövetkezetek működési modelljének kidolgozása a foglalkoztatás elősegítése érdekében. Vállalkozásfejlesztési Kutató Intézet Nonprofit Kft., Budapest, 2010. p. 3.

lack of educational opportunities.

5.2. Directions and solutions

5.2.1. Every nation has to have a couple of political goals that can be communicated as main targets of the community as a whole. Since 2010 these official aims – among others - are the development of tourism based on natural resources, especially on geothermal energy and thermal water, and expansion of the extent of cultivated territory in Hungary. What does it mean concerning our topic? On the one hand a standardized and consensual Roma policy must become one of these main goals communicated towards the voters, and on the other hand, social cooperatives and other forms of the developing social economy can both contribute to the transformation of the Hungarian agriculture, and the enhancement of economic strengths of Roma population.

Moreover, resuscitation of traditional Roma handicraft professions is a real - although restricted - possibility. There are several professions that must be opened up in advance of Roma citizens; e.g. becoming a lawyer, a teacher,¹⁰⁷ a policeman with a Roma background in most of the cases requires positive discrimination (affirmative action).

5.2.2. According to Solymosi's thesis, any intervention into Roma community's life is effective, if the following interventions are implemented at the same time:¹⁰⁸

- a) Giving fish - Superficial intervention focusing on symptoms, neglecting reasons; e.g. rehabilitation of Roma ghettos
- b) Teaching to weave a fishing net - Operative intervention, neglecting why the reasons developed; e.g. Creating jobs, adult education, improvement of housing
- c) Fish-pond - Preventive intervention, influencing the development of reasons; e.g. fighting children's poverty.
- d) (Awaking) need for eating fish - Foundational intervention, without direct effect, but providing prerequisites and a framework; e.g. developing communities, Local health development programs improving health education.

5.2.3. In the last few years it has become obvious that projects should be for longer than one year periods. More time is ordinarily needed to establish and operate programs.

5.2.4. Project efforts should be located very close to Roma settlements and markets. Projects need to have – at least partially - independence from state and business sectors to build Roma self-reliance.

5.2.5. According to Nancy Fraser the “struggle for recognition” has been fast becoming the paradigmatic form of political conflict in the late twentieth century. Demands for “recognition of difference” - stated Fraser more than fifteen years ago - fuel struggles of groups mobilised under the banners of nationality, ethnicity, “race,” etc.¹⁰⁹ In these “postsocialist” conflicts, group identity supplants class interest as the chief medium of political mobilisation. Cultural domination supplants exploitation as the fundamental injustice, and in addition, cultural recognition displaces socioeconomic redistribution as the remedy for injustice and the goal of political struggle.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ There are very few teachers of Roma origin. According a teachers’ survey of 2002 in 898 elementary schools with a high rate of Romani pupils altogether only 45 teachers declared themselves Roma or of Roma origin [from 27730].

¹⁰⁸ Solymosi József Bonifác: Health Component of the National Roma Integration Strategy. [http://www.romadecade.org/files/downloads/Better%20Health%20Conference/Jozsef%20SOLYMOSY%20NRIS%20Health%20component%20Hungary%20pdf\[1\].pdf](http://www.romadecade.org/files/downloads/Better%20Health%20Conference/Jozsef%20SOLYMOSY%20NRIS%20Health%20component%20Hungary%20pdf[1].pdf) pp. 22-23.

¹⁰⁹ Nancy Fraser: Az újraelosztástól az elismerésig? Az igazságosság dilemmái a poszt-szocializmus korában. In: Rasszizmus a tudományban (szerk.: Kende Anna és Vajda Róza), Napvilág kiadó, 2008., 337. o.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

Consequently, durable changes require involvement of both the prominent representatives of the majority of the society and the prominent representatives of the given minority. The previous ones can successfully accelerate and back several aspirations and activities, doing it without simulating or replacing self-reliance of the given group or strata which struggles for certain cultural goals. Fortunately, concerning our topic new tendencies have arisen in the first decade of the twenty-first century: few opulent and well-known Hungarians offered huge amounts for education and training of talented Roma pupils. One of these was Sándor Demján, who made a pledge of 8 billion forints (approximately 40 million dollars that time) for a 5 year long period in July of 2006.

5.2.6. The legal situation surrounding the Roma must be addressed; the underlying facts and circumstances of the legal regulation are to be examined.

The issue of discrimination emerged on the visible national agenda in connection with the debates generated by the process leading to the adoption of a comprehensive anti-discrimination law in late 2003 [ETA- Equal Treatment Act]. The law which is related to the Article 13 EC created the Equal Treatment Authority – an organ responsible to combat all sorts and forms of discrimination - not only in education but in all other areas as well. The Authority started to operate on February 1 2005. Of course, Hungary has ratified almost all major international legal instruments combating discrimination, like the UNESCO convention against Discrimination in Education, ILO convention no.111, or the International Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Racial Discrimination. Hungary is also part of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and others.¹¹¹ Educational law and other sectoral laws used to contain separate and quite inconsistent anti-discrimination provisions,¹¹² which have been amended to invoke the provisions of the ETA. The ETA distinguishes three types of exceptions [a] general objective justification, [b] special exceptions, [c] positive action.¹¹³

Here, the importance of embracing *group-specific rights* in the policies for Roma representation must be emphasized.¹¹⁴

Alternative institutions for securing Roma rights were discussed (e.g. heads of state and government, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the judicial system, the parliament). The need to reform the Roma self-government system in Hungary in order to provide adequate representational rights for this marginalized ethnic minority was also addressed and several changes have happened already: a Framework Agreement has been signed by the National Roma Self-government (Országos Roma Önkormányzat – ORÖ) and the Government of Hungary. The main reason behind the Framework Agreement was that several problems of previous programs and strategic objectives became obvious:

- a) They were not linked with a comprehensive monitoring, it was not possible to measure success.
- b) The use of resources was doubtful in many ways.
- c) It's not known how many people had been involved in the programs.
- d) It's not known how many of those sources had been reached by Roma.

The Government and ORÖ – among other measures - jointly undertook to create 100.000 new workplaces for Romas (especially for Roma women), vocational training for 80.000 Roma adults, and the education of 5000 Roma students in higher education. The Government undertook financial support, administrative support, and the enactment of those legal instruments that are needed for the implementation of the goals mentioned above. The National Roma Self Government undertook the

¹¹¹ Pál Tamás, op. cit., p. 11.

¹¹² E.g.: to decrease segregation, a few years ago even school district borders have been adjusted so that the disadvantaged population in each district does not exceed the average percentage of disadvantaged in the settlement as a whole by more than 15 percent.

¹¹³ Pál Tamás, op. cit., p. 11.

¹¹⁴ Andrew Burton: Minority Self-governance: Minority Representation in Flux for the Hungarian Roma. *Ethnopolitics* Volume 6, Issue 1, 2007. pp. 67-88.

„staff” for the preparation, organization and arrangement of processes by providing Roma coordinators who will be able to communicate and cooperate with the members of the Roma communities in a less bureaucratic way.

5.2.7. Programs - both on national and European level – are to be launched.

a) Currently, most public funds designated to the Roma population relate to the strategic plan of the Decade of the Roma Integration Program.¹¹⁵ The main goals of this program are (as follows):

- Accelerate the social integration of Roma and improve their economic situation;
- Reduce the gap between the socioeconomic conditions of the Roma and non-Roma populations in the short term and eliminate the gap in the long term; and
- Strengthen social cohesion.

b) Owing to the supporting role taken by the Hungarian EU Presidency, the need to devote attention to the issue of the Roma and the promotion of national efforts in this respect became a highly consensual issue. In response to the communication by the European Commission, the Hungarian Presidency proposed the draft Council conclusions of “An EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020” which were adopted by the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council on 19 May. The conclusions stress the Member States’ primary competence concerning the inclusion of marginalized and disadvantaged communities, such as Roma; in order to improve the situation of the Roma, Member States developed inclusion strategies or integrated sets of policy measures within their broader social inclusion policies by the end of 2011. The document calls on the Member States to make efforts for the effective use of EU funds and to consider increasingly taking into account the goal of the inclusion of the Roma when designing, implementing and monitoring their National Reform Programmes. By the spring of 2012, the Commission will assess the national strategies and will report back to the European Parliament and the Council.¹¹⁶

c) Roma NGOs need support in building international relationships as well. Currently, with few exceptions like OSI’s cultural network programs, Roma lack connections with groups in other countries. Coordinators are needed to establish relations between the Roma and non-Roma organizations operating in different countries and to organize joint projects.¹¹⁷

5.2.8. The socialization experience of the relevant actors (of both sides) were still gained in the old authoritarian-bureaucratic system¹¹⁸ built on several prejudices and fears. That’s why the culture of protest, as a functional segment of political culture is still in the making in Hungary, and there are several problems which should be solved by processes of political learning.¹¹⁹

The majority of the Hungarian society tends to show racist tendencies in many ways; the most notable of which was the appearance of paramilitary groups and organizations, such as the Hungarian Guard (Magyar Gárda). Several enactments and legal decisions have been made against the frightening presence of those entities, but further measures of precaution are to be taken.

„The ethnicity- and race-based opinions expressed at the demonstrations and events organized by the Hungarian Guard against »gypsy crime«, in fact breached the basic principle of the right to human dignity. The Hungarian Guard has [...] turned discrimination into an agenda. In order to express this, the Hungarian Guard has held intimidating demonstrations on several occasions.” – the Supreme Court expressed in its verdict approving the dissolution of the Guard. In 2011, as one of

¹¹⁵ Government measures were funded from the budget and the resources of the New Hungary Development Plan until 2010.

¹¹⁶ The most important achievements of the Hungarian presidency. pp. 11-12. <http://www.mfa.gov.hu/NR/rdonlyres/AFA97CC8-53C6-4C2C-A6CF-1F5D7A527CFF/0/eredmenyekvEN.pdf>

¹¹⁷ Empowering Roma Youth, p. 34.

¹¹⁸ Máté Szabó: Human Rights and Civil Society in Hungary (1988-2008). OBH, Budapest, 2009. 262. o.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

the successors of the banned Hungarian Guard, the New Hungarian Guard hate group continues to organize such demonstrations.¹²⁰

Moreover, social sciences draw attention to the confirmed fact that disadvantaged groups tend to generate multitudinous and violent actions after reaching a „critical mass”.¹²¹

First, police training lies at the heart of preventing more racially-motivated violence. If racist violence is committed, police must benefit from good training to collect evidence, so that the prosecution can correctly define the nature of the crime committed. Indeed, if the investigation at the crime scene is incomplete and racial motives are not uncovered, the justice system cannot ensure full accountability.¹²²

But are local police adequately trained to cope with lower-level, day-to-day incidents of harassment and violence that may not hit the headlines as hard? Police need to adapt conflict resolution mechanisms to their local contexts.¹²³

Secondly, the Hungarian law enforcement authorities should consider making concerted efforts to include more Hungarians of Roma origin into police units, in order to break down the cognitive sentiment of "us against them" that feeds into social tensions.¹²⁴

We have to transform the deeply entrenched anti-Roma stereotypes that are stomached at many levels within Hungarian society - in private circles, in the political arena and in the media.¹²⁵ „We must try to understand what is happening, under what circumstances, who the main actors are, what their aims and motivations are, but we should be very cautious about judging the process and the results. Application of theories, comparison with developments in other parts of the world or in other periods of history will only be fertile if we are extremely careful with generalization and value judgments.”¹²⁶

"Gypsy crime", "Gypsy criminality" is a problematic notion the usage of which has been infiltrated into the public discourse as a mainstream concept. To handle the usage of these expressions (and of many others, similar to these) in public speech is one of the most enormous challenges in Hungary today: to make real society's knowledge on the distinction between „Gypsy crime” or "Gypsy criminality" („cigánybűnözés”) that are racist expressions, criminalizing all the Roma living in Hungary and *Gypsy criminality habits* („cigány bűnelkövetési szokások”¹²⁷) that could be measured even statistically. The latter shows the typicals of the criminality within a specific strata of Hungarian society without criminalizing all the members of that group in general. Even these differences are to be taught nowadays.

Unfortunately, the consensus on the usage and meaning of these notions had been missing even among the representatives of Hungarian criminal sciences for many years; many had chosen the way of neglecting that problem at all, avoiding even mentioning of these words (gypsy, roma) at all.¹²⁸

¹²⁰ <http://www.athenainstitute.eu/en/map/olvas/42>

¹²¹ Rixer Ádám: Egy új társadalmi szerződés körvonalai a roma kérdés ürügyén. *De iurisprudencia et iure publico* 2009/3. sz. 11 p. (www.dieip.hu)

¹²² Joelle Fiss: Roma Citizens Remain At Risk In Hungary, Reforms Needed. The Huffington Post, February 23, 2010. <http://www.szema.hu/index.php/english/148-roma-citizens-remain-at-risk-in-hungary-reforms-needed>

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Éva KUTI: Nonprofit Organizations as Social Players in the period of Transition: Roles and Challenges. In: „Szelényi 60” (1998)., <http://hi.rutgers.edu>

¹²⁷ Póczik Szilveszter: Roma bűnelkövetők kriminológiai vizsgálata – 2002. <http://www.szochalo.hu/hireink/article/101090/3218/page/1/>

¹²⁸ See as an example: Szabó Győző: A közrend és közbiztonság aktuális kérdései. In: A közbiztonság és közrend

5.2.9. Specifically, if we ask why Roma are under-represented in the national assemblies of central and Eastern European states, one of the realistic answers is the absence of a clearly defined conception of Roma nationalism at the national and transnational level.¹²⁹ This ambiguous nationalism stands in contrast to invocations of nationalism by other minorities in the region, notably the Turkish minority in Bulgaria and the Hungarian minority in Romania, whose electoral support is contiguous to their respective demographic weights. Both of these minorities link nationalism to specific cultural interests whereas the interests of Roma tend to relate to socio-economic and political factors. Whilst many factors conspire to impede the appropriate political representation of Roma across central and Eastern Europe, this article seeks to shed light on the oft-neglected impact of Roma nationalism.¹³⁰

In point of fact, initiatives intended to create a Romani nation or, as it is sometimes described, "creating a conceptually and institutionally separate political entity", only resemble programmes for social integration and equality of opportunity because, in articulating their target group, they ethnicise all social and political issues. Ultimately, such initiatives are anachronistic, violent and futile.¹³¹

5.2.10. Together with the Act No. CXXX of 2011 on Legislation another law on public reconciliation of norms with society entered into force in Hungary on 1 January 2011 to enable participation of individuals from natural persons to so called strategic partners in legislation.

In the field of dialogue between governmental bodies and different civil entities in Hungary more effective guaranties need to be forced because of the fact that all the existing legal regulations on obligatory involvement of civil actors are so called *lex imperfectas*. It means that the possibility of participation of NGOs in different areas of public life (for example the legislative process) exists as a mere consequence of momentary political etiquette. There are some newly created institutions [e.g. National Fund of Cooperation (Nemzeti Együttműködési Alap)].

5.2.11. Today's education policy in Hungary identifies integration as a political, social and pedagogical aim,¹³² even though it was not a story of success in the last decade.^{133 134} It pays special attention to financing special needs education. There have been many attempts to invent integrated education adapted for the Hungarian – and also for the Hungarian Roma – situation. E.g. the National Educational Integration Network (OOIH) launched a program in 2003 that focused on the integrated education of primary school children (grades 1 through 8) in 45 schools in Hungary. The goal of the program was to compensate for the educational disadvantages of children from poor and/or minority families by providing quality education in an integrated environment.¹³⁵

However, the real task is still the creation of concord between the interests of different communities, education policy, legislative regulation and possibilities of institutions. That kind of

aktuális kérdései. Magyar Kriminológiai Társaság, Budapest, 1991. pp. 6-19.

¹²⁹ Aidan McGarry: Ambiguous nationalism? Explaining the parliamentary under-representation of Roma in Hungary and Romania. *Romani Studies*; December 2009, Vol. 19 Issue 2, p. 22.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Aladár Horváth: Gadjo Nation – Roma Nation? <http://www.errc.org/cikk.php?cikk=2655>

¹³² Kőpatakiné Mészáros Mária: Special Needs Education in Hungary - Supportive Education Policy. OFI, Budapest, 2009. <http://www.ofi.hu/tudastar/iii-resz-country-report/special-needs-education>

¹³³ Kertesi – Kézdi: *Cigányok és iskola*. Educatio Kiadó, Budapest, 1996.

¹³⁴ Andl Helga: Egyszervolt iskola. Esettanulmány egy iskola megszűnéséről. *Új Pedagógiai Szemle* 2008/11-12, 153. o.

¹³⁵ Kézdi Gábor – Surányi Éva: Sampling and Methodology in the Evaluation of the National Education Integration Program, and the Conclusions of the Evaluation. Mintavétel és elemzési módszerek az oktatási integrációs program hatásvizsgálatában, és a hatásvizsgálatból levonható következtetések. Budapest Working Papers On The Labour Market / Budapest Munkagazdaságtani Füzetek BWP – 2010/2. Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Közgazdaságtudományi Intézet, Budapest, 2010. p. 4.

harmonizing requires a comprehensive (wide range) social and professional conciliation which was the missing element in the past in Hungary.

5.2.12. Financial issues of Roma organisations

One of the main objectives is to fulfil the gap in communication between Roma citizens and the Hungarian state with civil institutions. In many cases their operation is limited in financial resources.¹³⁶

Central budgetary support in the form of invitations to tender is available for the professional further training and preparation for public activities of representatives of the local Roma minority self-governments, as well as members of Roma social organizations. The aim of programmes based on the particular demands of the locality is to strengthen cooperation between Roma minority self-governments and organizations and the settlement self-governments and public administrative organizations, and to reinforce dialogue between the different strata in public life.¹³⁷

Beyond the financial support of public foundations in the past and Wekerle Sándor Foundmanagement in the future, National Civil Fund and its successor, National Fund of Cooperation is to be mentioned, as an entity (re)distributing a huge amount towards (Roma) civil society.

Concerning **private funds** revenues originating from 1 percent of the personal income tax designation must be mentioned. The amount collected usually covers only related advertising and other administration expenses.

Among many other grants the Roma Inclusion Grant¹³⁸ - founded by George Soros – had supported nonprofit legal entities (non-governmental and public organizations, libraries, museums, cultural centers, associations, communities, registered charities, etc.) that work in the field of arts and culture and have the status of beneficiary, carrying out Projects that address one or more of the priorities of the program.¹³⁹

The majority of companies do not donate to social programs, either because they do not have the funds or because the company does not have a culture of giving. Even among large companies, only very few have developed a corporate philosophy of social responsibility or a strategic plan for philanthropy. No detailed statistics on corporate giving are available because companies generally treat this information as confidential; we do know that approximately 80 percent of the donations are financial. In-kind service or volunteer work done by corporate personnel make up a smaller percentage.¹⁴⁰

In conclusion, beyond financial „aid” donors should support Roma NGOs with training to make their

¹³⁶ Lucia Sedlakova – Tatiana Tokolyova: Development of the Civil Society of the Visegrad Region. In: István Tarrósy (ed.): Social, Economic and Political Cohesion in the Danube Region in Light of EU Enlargement. 37. o.

¹³⁷ Toso Donceev, op. cit., p. 38.

¹³⁸ <http://www.soros.org/initiatives/arts/focus/roma/grants> (2011. 10. 20.)

¹³⁹ Priorities were:

- Capacity building: Strengthening the capacity of individuals and organizations to implement and sustain good practices and effective ways of working.
- Collaboration: Building alliances and networks with other projects and organizations to encourage knowledge sharing within the country of operation and beyond.
- Diversity: Promoting greater equality and access to cultural goods and activities for the most marginalized beneficiaries.
- Public Engagement with Critical Social Issues: Using the power of arts and culture to promote discussion, debate, and critical reflection on social issues of importance to target communities and beneficiaries.

¹⁴⁰ Empowering Roma Youth, p. 27.

organizations viable and effective.

5.2.13. The state's youth system did not have a single organization that would have dealt specifically with Roma issues for many years, and no independent organizational unit existed within the Roma segment that would have dealt principally with young people. Representatives of Roma affairs earlier appeared in several ministries,¹⁴¹ but since 2010 the majority of roma affairs belong to the Ministry of National Resources (State Secretariat for Social, Family and Youth Affairs, State Secretariat for Education, State Secretariat for Culture, etc.) and continuation of this centralization is suggested.

We must strengthen cooperation between Roma and non-Roma youth organizations with joint grants and intercultural programs. We know of only a few programs (for instance, those run by Artemission Foundation) that specifically deal with intercultural initiatives targeting Hungarian young people, and information about them is limited.

The establishment of scholarships for youth assistants who primarily or exclusively work with Roma young people. Launching such a scholarship program would greatly facilitate OSI's professional positioning, since no such initiatives exist.¹⁴²

5.2.14. The importance of the role of churches, religious associations and other religious groups without a certain legal form can not be overestimated. As it was already pointed out in the third sub-chapter several entities providing a spiritual renewal for Roma have been launched in the last decades and, in addition, almost all the major Christian churches have began their own Roma-mission - called Roma-pastoration – in Hungary. These processes should be supported by the authorities as well, by pronouncing that Roma-pastoration is a public duty that must be backed by state organs even financially in Hungary (even though it's obvious that the proper monitoring of the use of those amounts can not be done).

¹⁴¹ Empowering Roma Youth, p. 10.

¹⁴² Empowering Roma Youth, p. 33.